**The five most overhyped tech products of 2010**

The pace of innovation in the technology industry quickened again in 2010, after stumbling momentarily in 2009 because of the global recession. The most potent sign of the rebound was the steady stream of new products, new technologies, and new ideas that pushed the previous boundaries and rethought the status quo.

Of course, innovation means taking risks and some of them — including some the most widely publicized — turn out to duds. And, even some of the most successful new products get overhyped and oversold.

That’s the subject of this week’s Monday morning editorial: the most overhyped products of 2010. Here’s my list.

**5. Apple iPad**

This is the pick that I’m going to take the most flak over, but it deserves to be on the list and I’ll explain why. There’s no denying that the iPad has been a mega-hit. Over 7 million of them were sold in its first six months on the market and it is changing the computing industry more than any single product has in the past decade. As I said in my article [**The truth about iPad: It’s only good for two things**](http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/hiner/?p=5941), it is a very good effort for a 1.0 product.

But, the iPad has been hyped into the stratosphere to the point that too many people are thinking of it as full laptop replacement. It is not. It is a PC companion. While the iPad has cannibalized the low-end of the laptop market, especially netbooks, you have to keep in mind that most of those buyers are looking for a second, more portable machine. In business, the iPad is a great fit for executives who spend all day in meetings and for consultants and field workers who aren’t at a desk but are out interacting with customers. However, it’s still not a great fit for people who need to sit down and efficiently plow through a lot of work. That’s a lot of people.

**4. Microsoft Kinect**

Bill Gates has been talking about this product for years, long before it ever had a product name. I remember when the Nintendo Wii came out, Gates said the real innovation would be when you could play a tennis video game with your own racket in your hand instead of a game controller. To Microsoft’s credit, the company has almost entirely brought that vision to life with the Microsoft Kinect, a new add-on for Xbox 360 that is flying off the shelves this holiday season.

When it works, the Kinect is a pretty cool experience that allows you to jump into a video game to run obstacle courses and kick soccer balls right in the middle of your own living room, without breaking anything. It’s great exercise and it’s amazingly accurate at times. However, it doesn’t work very well in rooms with direct sunlight (is it only meant for basements and mancaves?), the facial recognition feature is laughably awful, and navigating menus with the gesture interface is frustratingly slow.

The Kinect is a very creative innovation, but it’s also gimmicky and raw, and it doesn’t work nearly as well as the commercials make it appear.

**3. Samsung Galaxy Tab**

The most innovative thing about the Galaxy Tab is that Samsung was the first vendor to finally bring an Android tablet to the mass market. We’ve been hearing all year that an army of Android tablets would be invading in waves. It never happened, mainly because Google never released a tablet version of Android and [**threw cold water**](http://www.techradar.com/news/phone-and-communications/mobile-phones/google-android-not-optimised-for-tablets--715550) on the early vendors that attempted to do their own Android tablet adaptations.

Samsung took its successful Galaxy S line of Android smartphones and kicked it up a notch into a 7-inch Android tablet, and voilà, out popped the Galaxy Tab. While Samsung did an excellent job with the hardware (as I noted in [**my Galaxy Tab review**](http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/hiner/?p=6696)), the software leaves a lot to be desired and the product is badly overpriced. The Galaxy Tab has been [**portrayed as the iPad’s first real competitor**](http://ptech.allthingsd.com/20101110/samsung-galaxy-tab-tablet-review/), but I’d recommend waiting until the price drops, Google releases the official tablet version of Android, and the other big vendors release their Android tablets in the first half of 2011.

**2. Google TV**

The most disappointing technology of 2010 of Google TV. If Google would have focused on bringing Android apps to the flatscreen instead of trying to webify the television experience, this product could have been a huge success. Back in the spring I wrote that [**apps in Google TV could transform entertainment**](http://www.jasonhiner.com/blog/2010/5/22/apps-in-google-tv-could-transform-entertainment.html) by essentially lowering the bar on creating a TV “channel,” and not just an old school cable channel but a fully multimedia-enabled interactive channel.

That’s still possible, but it would require a strategy change from Google. What the company has attempted to do with Google TV is marry Web video with traditional cable/satellite all controlled by one box that you can use to search for the content you want. Unfortunately, the user experience is confusing and cumbersome. If you really want Web pages and Web video clips on your TV, just hook up a PC or a Mac. If you want on-demand content from the Internet (podcasts, Netflix streaming, Hulu Plus, etc.) delivered in a TV-like experience then get a [**Roku box**](http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/hiner/?p=6866) for a third of the price of Google TV.

**1. 3DTV**

It started at CES 2010 in January and carried all the way through to this holiday season. The TV vendors have bombarded the world with the message that the next big step in television is 3DTV and that you can have it today by buying their new premium TVs and polarized glasses. The problem is that neither the tech press nor the public is buying it.

In January, it was obvious that TV vendors saw 3DTV as “the next big thing” to keep people buying new TVs and to get early adopters to replace their newly-purchased flat panels with 3D models. The tech press sniffed this out right away at CES 2010 and panned the idea, knowing that buyers don’t want to replace the new TVs they’ve just purchased in recent years and even fewer will want to wear 3D glasses in their own living rooms. But, vendors are still trying to ram 3DTVs down consumers’ throats with big displays at Best Buy, Costco, and other retailers this holiday season. This is an even bigger gimmick than Microsoft Kinect and I don’t see many technology buyers falling for it.

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